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SCANDAL

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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The School for Scandal

A Comedy in Five Acts

By *Rutler*

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

^ "

Reprinted from the acting book used in the performances of the famous Boston Museum Company, by the courtesy of the late Annie M. Clarke, for many years its leading lady.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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The School for Scandal

CHARACTERS

(As originally produced at Drury Lane Theatre, May 8, 1777)

SIR PETER TEAZLE	. . . . .	Mr. King.
SIR OLIVER SURFACE	. . . . .	Mr. Yates.
JOSEPH SURFACE	. . . . .	Mr. Palmer.
CHARLES SURFACE	. . . . .	Mr. Smith.
CRABTREE	. . . . .	Mr. Parsons.
SIR BENJ. BACKBITE	. . . . .	Mr. Dodd.
ROWLEY	. . . . .	Mr. Aickin.
MOSES	. . . . .	Mr. Baddeley.
TRIP	. . . . .	Mr. Lamash.
SNAKE	. . . . .	Mr. Packer.
CARELESS	. . . . .	Mr. Farren.
SIR HARRY BUMPER	. . . . .	Mr. Gawdry.
LADY TEAZLE	. . . . .	Mrs. Abington.
MARIA	Miss P. Hopkins.
LADY SNEERWELL	Miss Sherry.
MRS. CANDOUR	Miss Pope.
SERVANTS.		



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INTRODUCTION

“The School for Scandal,” the vintage champagne of the rich and varied cellar of the English drama, artificial but sparkling, was written by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and was the fifth play from his pen. It is undoubtedly superficial in character and full of faults from a critical standpoint, yet its brilliant wit and its vast powers of entertainment remain undimmed and undiminished nearly a century and a half after its first performance. Its plot by itself is of the slightest interest, the progress of its dramatic story involves no searching or ingenious development of character and no single member of its cast, save perhaps Sir Peter Teazle, makes any legitimate claim upon one’s sympathy or affections, but by dint of sheer skill in the management of its materials, fortunate contrivance of situation and perpetual play of wit, it survives, a triumph of unscrupulous dramaturgy.

Sheridan was born in Dublin, October 30, 1751, and died in London, July 7, 1816, and the interval between these dates was filled by him with various and important achievement in literature, politics and drama. “The School for Scandal,” his greatest success in the latter field, was written in his twenty-sixth year and was first produced on May 8, 1777, at Drury Lane Theatre, London, with the really great cast printed on the opposite page.

It is interesting to note that no collective performance and few individual impersonations have ever since equalled those of the company that originally created this play. Garrick, who contributed the prologue for the first performance, attended its rehearsals, and no one felt greater confidence than he in its success. Yet the first programme of the play did not bear its author’s name. On the night before its first performance the necessary license was refused on the ground that the character of Moses was intended as a satire on a money-lender who recently had been a candidate for the office of City Chamberlain in opposition to Wilkes, but Sheridan easily persuaded Lord Hertford, the then Lord Chamberlain, to disregard what was probably a mere piece of theatrical politics.

It is recorded that Sheridan was characteristically behind-hand with the manuscript of this comedy, the play having been announced before the parts were in the hands of the actors, and that the last five scenes had to be dashed off while the earlier scenes were already in rehearsal. "Finished at last, thank God," wrote Sheridan on the last leaf of his copy, to which outburst of piety Hopkins, the prompter, added a cordial "Amen." It abundantly appears, however, from the discovery among his papers of several different drafts of the earlier acts, that he took a pains with this part of the composition commensurate with its merit, making many experiments and combinations before he could satisfy his nice and critical taste. Moore, his biographer, who offers this testimony, says that he took ostentatious pains to convey the idea that he had left everything to the last, and it may well be that this anecdote illustrates his vanity rather than his spontaneity. But Sheridan has elsewhere and repeatedly shown his brilliant ability to be equal to the occasion, and his habit of procrastination in other matters is too well known to be deemed improbable in this. It is a fact that while the earlier parts of the play exist in several drafts and forms, there was but one hastily scrawled copy of the last five scenes. This may be the explanation of the recorded fact that the first night of "The School for Scandal" was an unusually nervous business for all concerned. When the curtain had fallen and the play had gained an unequivocal success, it was thus "only natural," as he phrased it to Lord Byron, that Sheridan should have got very drunk and have been taken to the watch-house for making a row in the street.

The original acting copy of this play survived until March 5, 1856, when it shared the fate of Covent Garden Theatre, in the library of which it then reposed, and was burned with that house and its entire contents. There exists, however, in the possession of Sir George Chetwynd, the original autograph copy of the play that was sent to the licensor of the time of its production.

Sheridan was accused by Watkins, in his scissors and paste biography of that author, of plagiarizing this piece in whole or in part from the work of an anonymous "young lady" who was said to have sent in the manuscript and then opportunely to have died; but this charge was successfully met by the ample testimony to its originality offered by Moore's "Life." To similar charges made during Sheridan's lifetime he never condescended to make other reply than that implied in the

genial banter of Sir Fretful Plagiary, in his "The Critic"—which was answer enough.

"The School for Scandal," thus successfully launched, ran for twenty nights in its first season and for sixty-five in its second. For several years it continued to be acted regularly three nights a week, and is said to have drawn nearly twice as much money as any other play of its time. Its "author's night" produced £648. So profitable a piece of theatrical property was it that it was not printed at once, according to the usual custom of the time, but was kept in manuscript for its better protection, no authorized edition having been published prior to Sheridan's death in 1816. It was uttered piratically in Ireland in 1777, in an incorrect edition derived from a copy of the play sent by Sheridan to his eldest sister, Mrs. Le Fanu, who sold it to Ryder, the Dublin manager. A similar corrupt and unauthorized edition was published in London in 1783. The first American edition of this play appeared in New York, in 1786, over the imprint of Hugh Gaine. Publication appears to have been authorized by Henry, the manager, whose personal relations with the Sheridan family were close, and who had his copy from the author.

The first performance of "The School for Scandal" on this side of the Atlantic was given on May 26, 1781, in the island of Jamaica by the American company who had retreated to this safe harbor during the troublous period 1774-1784. The first production of this play in the United States was given in Baltimore, Maryland, February 3, 1784, by Dennis Ryan's company. The Sir Peter was Mr. Heard; the Lady Teazle, Mrs. Ryan. "The School for Scandal" was first seen in New York on December 12, 1785, under the management of Hallam and Henry. Philadelphia first saw the comedy July 30, 1787, under the extraordinary title of "The Pernicious Vice of Scandal." In the early days of this city theatres were not advertised as theatres nor plays as plays, opera houses and operas being the usual euphemism for these unspeakable things; and thus it was that Sheridan's masterpiece came to be rechristened in harmony with these circumstances. On January 5, 1791, at the theatre in Southwark, in that city, George Washington saw, under recorded circumstances of very undemocratic pomp, Hallam play Sir Peter in this play.

The first Boston performance of "The School for Scandal" was given November 12, 1792, by Mr. Harper's company, in the New Exhibition Room, for the benefit of Mrs. Morris,

Kenna was the Sir Peter. On December 5th a performance of this play by the same company was stopped by legal process on now unknown grounds. Interference with the drama in this city, of which divers recent instances will easily be recalled, is thus seen to have had an early and solid precedent.

A list of the players who have variously adorned or been helped to success by the several parts of this play would constitute substantially a catalogue of all the prominent actors of the last century and a quarter in England and the United States. As an international compromise of this embarrassment of riches let it be recorded that Sir Charles Wyndham made his American début as Charles Surface at Wallack's Theatre, New York, September 15, 1869.

"The School for Scandal" was produced in German, in Vienna, by Schroeder, and it was also acted at The Hague, in Dutch. It has been translated into nearly every European language and also into Hindustani. The following French plays are indebted to it to a greater or less extent: "Les Deux Neveux," acted in 1788 by the Young Comedians of the Comte de Beaujolais, "Les Portraits de Famille," "Valsain et Florville," "Tartuffe des Moeurs," acted at the Français, "Les Deux Cousins," acted at the Vaudeville, and "L'Ecole du Scandale," acted at the Porte St. Martin.

F. E. CHASE.

Boston, October 21, 1914.

COSTUMES

SIR PETER.—Drab or salmon-colored velvet coat and breeches trimmed with silver, white satin vest, white silk stockings, shoes, buckles, lace ruffles, etc.

SIR OLIVER.—Brown coat and waistcoat with embroidered buttonholes, black satin breeches, silk stockings, shoes, buckles, three-cornered hat, brown camlet overcoat, embroidered.
Second dress : Plain camlet drab overcoat.

JOSEPH SURFACE.—Blue or black coat, white waistcoat, black pantaloons, black silk stockings, and pumps.

CHARLES SURFACE.—Green coat, white waistcoat, light breeches, white silk stockings, dress shoes.

CRABTREE.—Purple velvet cloak lined with blue satin, satin waistcoat, embroidered satin breeches, white silk stockings.

BACKBITE.—Fashionable colored dresscoat, white and crimson waistcoats, flesh-colored tight pantaloons, silk stockings, pumps, and opera hat.

ROWLEY.—Greatcoat, black breeches and waistcoat, gray camlet overcoat.

MOSES.—Black velvet coat, waistcoat, and breeches, trimmed with narrow gold lace, black stockings, and shoes with buckles.

CARELESS.—Black coat and pantaloons, white waistcoat, black silk stockings, and pumps.

SIR HARRY.—Blue coat, white waistcoat, and black pantaloons.

TRIP.—Handsome dress livery.

SNAKE.—Black coat, waistcoat and trousers, silk stockings, and pumps.

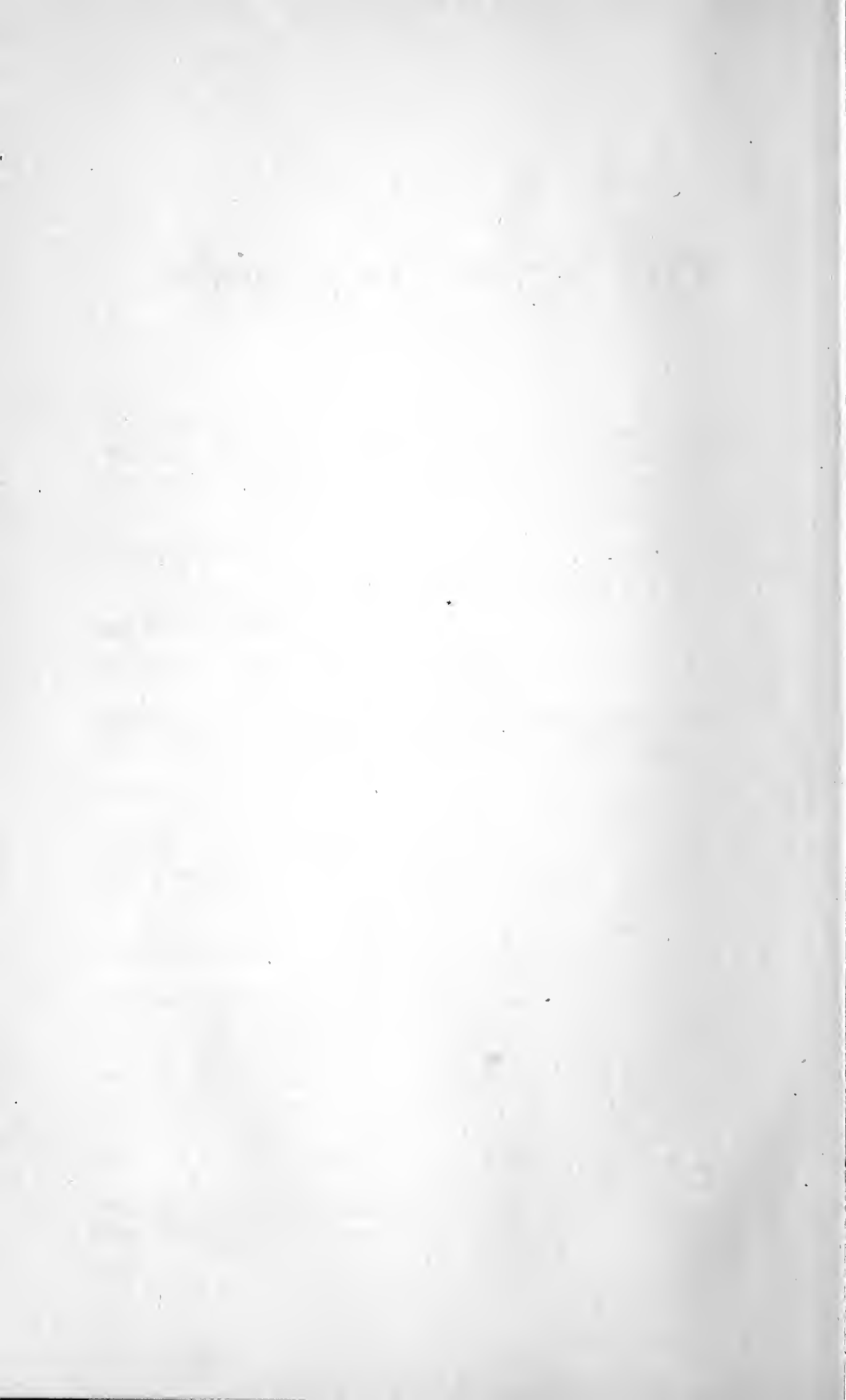
JOSEPH'S SERVANT.—Plain blue coat, yellow waistcoat and breeches, white stockings, and shoes.

LADY TEAZLE.—Elegant white gauze dress, handsomely worked with silver flowers, white satin petticoat and body, and plume of feathers.

MARIA.—White satin dress with black trimming.

LADY SNEERWELL.—White dress, neatly trimmed.

MRS. CANDOUR.—White satin petticoat and body, and flowered gauze dress over.



The School for Scandal

ACT I

Scene I.—LADY SNEERWELL'S *boudoir*. *Dressing-table and chair at R. At L. table and chair. Scene set to depth of stage with doors at R. and L. I E. A few chairs and sofa well up stage, which is comparatively clear in foreground.*

(*Discovered, LADY SNEERWELL, R., at the dressing-table ; SNAKE drinking chocolate, L.*)

LIGHTS full up.

LADY S. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

SNAKE. They were, madam ; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

LADY S. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

SNAKE. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours, and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

LADY S. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent and a great deal of industry.

SNAKE. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited ; of four forced elopements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a tête-à-tête in the *Town and Country Magazine*, when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

LADY S. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

SNAKE. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a

free tongue and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint and mellowness of sneer which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

LADY S. Ah! You are partial, Snake.

SNAKE. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

LADY S. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. (*They rise.*) Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

SNAKE. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

LADY S. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

SNAKE. I do. Here are two young men to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of—the youngest the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so, why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

LADY S. Then at once, to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

SNAKE. No?

LADY S. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions and profit by my assistance.

READY knock L.

SNAKE. Yet I am still more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

LADY S. Heavens! how dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that it is Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

SNAKE. Now, indeed, your conduct seems consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

LADY S. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense and benevolence.

SNAKE. Yes; and Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England—and above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

KNOCK at L.

LADY S. True—and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy, he has brought him entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT, L. I E.

SERV. Mr. Surface.

LADY S. (*crossing to c.*). Show him up. (**Exit SERV., L. I E.**) He generally calls about this time. I don't wonder at people giving him to me for a lover. (**SNAKE crosses to R.**)

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE, L. I E.

JOSEPH (L.). My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do today? (**Crosses to SNAKE at R.**) Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

LADY S. (C.). Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill-placed.

JOSEPH (R. C.). Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

(**SNAKE goes up R.**)

LADY S. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me

when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother. (*Goes to L.*)

JOSEPH. I have not seen either since I left you ; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

LADY S. Ah ! my dear Snake ! the merit of this belongs to you ; but do your brother's distresses increase ?

READY knock L.

JOSEPH. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed everything I ever heard of.

LADY S. Poor Charles !

JOSEPH. True, madam ; notwithstanding his vices one cannot help feeling for him. Poor Charles ! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him ; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a friend, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves ——

LADY S. O Lud ! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

JOSEPH. Egad, that's true ! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can only be so by one of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

KNOCK at L.

SNAKE (*coming down R.*). I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming. I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

JOSEPH (*shaking hands with SNAKE*). Sir, your very devoted. (*Exit SNAKE, R. I E.*) Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

LADY S. Why so ?

JOSEPH (R.). I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

LADY S. And do you think he would betray us ?

JOSEPH. Nothing more likely. Take my word for it, faithful even to his own villainy. Ah ! Maria !

Enter MARIA, L. I E.

LADY S. (C.). Maria, my dear, how do you do?—What's the matter?

MARIA (L.). Oh! there is that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out and ran hither to avoid them.

LADY S. Is that all?

JOSEPH (R.). If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

LADY S. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done that you should avoid him so?

MARIA. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said; his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

JOSEPH. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him—for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his Uncle Crabtree's as bad.

LADY S. Nay, but we should make allowance. Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

MARIA. For my part, I own, madam, wit loses its respect with me when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface? (*Crosses to C.* LADY S. *goes to L.*)

JOSEPH. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

LADY S. (L.). Pshaw!—there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature; the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your real opinion, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH (R.). To be sure, madam, that conversation where the spirit of raillery is suppressed will ever appear tedious and insipid.

MARIA (C.). Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable in a woman; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand little motives to depreciate each other, but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one. (*Goes up C.*)

Enter SERV., L. I E.

SERV. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

LADY S. Beg her to walk in. (Exit SERV., L. I E.) Now, Maria, however, here is a character to your taste; for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

MARIA. Yes,—with a very gross affectation of good-nature and benevolence she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

JOSEPH. I'faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell; whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defense.

LADY S. Hush, here she is!

Enter MRS. CANDOUR, L. I E.

MRS. C. (L. C.). My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

JOSEPH (R.). Just so, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. C. (*crossing to MARIA*). Oh, Maria! child. (MRS. C. and MARIA come down R. C. JOSEPH moves to C. and LADY S. L. C.) What! is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

MARIA (R.). I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

MRS. C. (R. C.). True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

MARIA. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

MRS. C. Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. C. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the

world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now, who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people that they say her uncle stopped her last week just as she was stepping into the York Mail with the dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for it there are no grounds for that report.

MRS. C. Ah, no foundation in the world; I dare swear no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino—though, to be sure, that affair was never rightly cleared up.

JOSEPH (C.). The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable. (*Goes up R.*)

MRS. C. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one. But what's to be done? As I said before, how will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things? No, no! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

(LADY S. *goes up L.* *She meets MARIA up stage where they converse.*)

JOSEPH. Ah, Mrs. Candour! if everybody had your forbearance and good-nature!

MRS. C. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By the by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

JOSEPH (*crossing to R. C.*). I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

MRS. C. (*crossing to L. C.*). Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way—so if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

JOSEPH. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

Enter SERV., L. I E.

SERV. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Exit SERV., L. I E.

LADY S. (*up stage, L. C.*). So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you sha'n't escape.

(*Comes down L. C. MARIA comes down R. to JOSEPH who moves to extreme R.*)

Enter CRABTREE, 1st, and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, 2d,
L. I E.

CRAB. (*at L.*). Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. (*Crosses to MRS. C. at L. C. She moves to R. C.*) Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad! ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet, too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

SIR B. (*at extreme L.*). O fie, uncle!

CRAB. (*left of c.*). Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymers in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire? Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione. Come, now;—your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and —

MRS. C. CRAB.

MARIA.

LADY S.

JOSEPH.

SIR B.

R.

L.

SIR B. Uncle, now,—pr'thee —

CRAB. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at these things.

LADY S. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

SIR B. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. (*Crosses to MARIA at R. C. CRAB., LADY S. and MRS. C. move to L.*) However, I have some love elegies which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

SIR B. MRS. C.

MARIA.

CRAB.

JOSEPH.

LADY S.

R.

L.

CRAB. 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you ! You will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

SIR B. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad they will be the most elegant things of their kind !

CRAB. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news ?

(MARIA and JOSEPH go up R. SIR B. crosses to R. MRS. C. R. C., CRAB. L. C., LADY S. L.)

MRS. C. (R. of C.). What, sir ; do you mean the report of —

CRAB. No, ma'am, that's not it—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

MRS. C. Impossible !

CRAB. Ask Sir Benjamin.

SIR B. 'Tis very true, ma'am ; everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

CRAB. Yes—and they do say there were very pressing reasons for it.

LADY S. Why, I have heard something of this before.

MRS. C. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

SIR B. (R.). O lud ! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

MRS. C. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

SIR B. True, madam ; there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of the weak part, avoid the least breath of air and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

MRS. C. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know,

Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

CRAB. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

SIR B. Oh, to be sure; the most whimsical circumstance.

LADY S. How was it, pray?

CRAB. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding of Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it—for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins. What! cries the lady dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), has Miss Piper had twins? This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next day everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put out to nurse.

LADY S. Strange, indeed!

(LADY S. and MRS. C. go up stage. JOSEPH comes down R.)

CRAB. Matter of fact, I assure you. (*Crosses R. C. to JOSEPH as SIR B. crosses to L. C.*) O lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

JOSEPH (R.). Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

CRAB. (R. C.). He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe. Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on.

JOSEPH. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

SIR B. (*crossing to R. C. to JOSEPH.* CRAB. *crosses to L. C.*). To be sure he may; for my part I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his Christian friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

(*Crosses back L. C., and CRAB. crosses to R. C.*)

CRAB. That's true, egad, nephew. If the old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman—no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many securities

as the Irish Tontine ; and that whenever he is sick they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

SIR B. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities ; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber and an officer behind every guest's chair.

JOSEPH. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

(SIR B. and CRAB. go up stage c.)

MARIA (*up stage R. C. Aside*). Their malice is intolerable. (*Crosses L.*) Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning ; I'm not very well.

Exit, L. I E.

MRS. C. (*up stage L. C.*). O dear ! she changes color very much.

LADY S. (*up stage L.*). Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her ; she may want your assistance.

MRS. C. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am. Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be !

Exit, L. I E.

LADY S. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

SIR B. (*up stage c.*). The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

CRAB. (*up stage R. C.*). But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that. Follow her, and put her in good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

SIR B. (*crossing down stage to JOSEPH, at R.*). Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you ; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone. (*Crosses L.*)

CRAB. (*crossing down stage to JOSEPH, at R.*) O lud, aye ! undone as ever man was. Can't raise a guinea ! (*Crosses L.*)

SIR B. (*crossing R., to JOSEPH*). And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable. (*Crosses L.*)

CRAB. (*crossing C.*). I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscot.

(*Crosses L.*)

READY change.

SIR B. (*crossing c.*). And I'm very sorry, also, to hear some bad stories against him. (*Going L.*)

CRAB. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

SIR B. But, however, as he's your brother —

(*Going L.*)

CRAB. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

Exit CRAB. and SIR B., L. I E. JOSEPH follows to c.

LADY S. (*coming down R. C.*). Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject that they have not quite run down.

JOSEPH. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

LADY S. I doubt her affections are further engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing further; in the meantime I'll go and plot mischief and you shall study —

JOSEPH. Sentiment.

Exeunt, R. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene II.—Room at SIR PETER TEAZLE'S. *Front set in second groove. Painted drop.*

LIGHTS full up.

Enter SIR P., R. I E.

SIR P. (C.). When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men, and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tift a little going to church, and came to a quarrel before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown,

nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors; yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter ROWLEY, L. I E.

Row. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant; how is it with you, sir?

SIR P. (R.). Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. (L.). What can have happened since yesterday?

SIR P. A good question to a married man!

Row. Nay, I'm sure, Sir Peter, your lady cannot be the cause of your uneasiness.

SIR P. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

SIR P. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper: and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

SIR P. Ay! and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexations, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel, too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, sir, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't, he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

SIR P. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their Uncle Sir Oliver's Eastern liberality gave them an

early independence; of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age; he is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes. But for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

SIR P. What! Let me hear.

Row. Sir Oliver has arrived, and is in town at this moment.

SIR P. How you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

SIR P. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis sixteen years since we met. We have had many a day together; but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

WARN curtain.

Row. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

SIR P. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits—however, he shall have his way: but, pray, does he know I am married?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

SIR P. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption? Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together: but he has been steady to his text. Would to heaven I had to mine! Well, he must be at my house, though!—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Row. By no means.

SIR P. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you; but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

SIR P. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries its punishment along with it.

RING quick curtain.

Exeunt ROW., L., SIR P., R.

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene I.—SIR P.'s house. Same set as Act I, Scene II.

Enter, at L. I E., LADY TEAZLE, followed by SIR P.

LIGHTS full up.

SIR P. (L.). Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

LADY T. (R.). Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything; and what's more, I will, too. What though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

SIR P. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority.

LADY T. Authority! No, to be sure. If you wanted authority over me you should have adopted me and not married me; I am sure you were old enough.

SIR P. Old enough!—ay—there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

LADY T. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

SIR P. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas.

LADY T. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame because flowers

are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses and lilies grew under our feet! (*Crosses to L.*)

SIR P. (*crossing to R.*). Oons! madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

LADY T. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

SIR P. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style, the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first, sitting at your tambour, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side; your hair combed smooth over a roll and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted of your own working.

LADY T. O yes, I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation 'to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my Aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

SIR P. Yes, yes, madam, 'twas so indeed.

LADY T. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan with the curate; to read a novel to my aunt, or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase. (*Crosses L.*)

SIR P. (*crossing R.*). I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white cobs to draw you to Kensington gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a dock'd coach-horse.

LADY T. No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

SIR P. You did, you did, and the horse's name was Dobbin. (*LADY T. shakes her head emphatically.*) This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you my wife. (*Crosses to L.*)

LADY T. (*crossing to R.*). Well, then,—and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation.

SIR P. And that is ——?

LADY T. Your widow !

SIR P. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill-conduct may disturb my peace of mind, it shall never break my heart, I promise you. However, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

LADY T. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense ?

SIR P. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me ?

LADY T. Lud, Sir Peter ! would you have me be out of the fashion ?

SIR P. The fashion, indeed ! What had you to do with the fashion before you married me ?

LADY T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

SIR P. Ay—there again—taste. Zounds ! madam, you had no taste when you married me !

LADY T. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter. (LADY T. takes him by the right arm and shakes her finger in his face laughingly. SIR P. suddenly realizes what he has said—he goes up and down the stage in disgust with himself.) And after having married you I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's. (Crosses to L.)

SIR P. (coming down R.). Ay, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

LADY T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

SIR P. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves ! Such a crew ! Ah ! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal and clippers of reputation.

LADY T. What ! would you restrain the freedom of speech ?

SIR P. Ah ! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

LADY T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace.

SIR P. Grace, quotha !

READY change.

LADY T. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's, too.

SIR P. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

LADY T. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good-bye to ye. (*Goes to door at L. I E. Turns back to laugh aggravatingly at him.*) So bye-bye, Sir Peter. Never, never, never differ again. (*Laughs.*)

Exit, L. I E.

SIR P. (C.). So—I have gained much by my intended expostulation. Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarreling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague and torment me.

Exit, R. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene II.—*Drawing-room at LADY S.'s, set to full depth of stage. Inner room visible at back through wide center door, where company are seated playing cards. Doors R. and L. I E. and R. 3 E. Tables R. and L. Discovered at table at R., JOSEPH at R., SIR B. at L., CRAB. sitting behind table. At L., MRS. C. at R. of table, LADY S. at L. SERV. attending with tea.*

LIGHTS full up.

LADY S. Nay, positively we will hear it.

JOSEPH. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

SIR B. O plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

CRAB. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

SIR B. (*rising and coming to c.*) But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know that

one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocketbook, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies;
To give them this title I'm sure is not wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

CRAB. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback, too.

JOSEPH. A very Phœbus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin.

SIR B. O dear, sir! trifles—trifles. (*Returns to R. C.*)

Enter at c., LADY T., followed by MARIA.

MRS. C. (*rising and crossing to SIR B.*). I must have a copy.

LADY S. (*rising and crossing to c., to meet LADY T.*). Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

LADY T. (c.). I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

LADY S. (L. C.). Maria, my dear, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

(*JOSEPH crosses to R. C., and gives his arm to MARIA.*)

MARIA (R. C.). I take very little pleasure in cards; however, I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

(*Retires up c. with LADY S. and JOSEPH, and sets up card table in inner room as LADY S. comes down L.*)

LADY T. (*aside*). I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me, before Sir Peter came.

MRS. C. (*they all advance, CRAB. at R., SIR B., R. C., LADY T., c., MRS. C., L. C., LADY S., L.*). Now, I'll die, but you are all so scandalous I'll forswear your society.

LADY T. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

MRS. C. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermillion to be handsome,

LADY S. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

CRAB. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

MRS. C. She has a charming fresh color.

LADY T. Yes, when it is fresh put on,

MRS. C. O fie! I'll swear her color is natural; I have seen it come and go.

LADY T. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night and comes again in the morning.

SIR B. And what's more, her maid can fetch and carry it.

MRS. C. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

CRAB. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

MRS. C. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost, and I don't think she looks more.

SIR B. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

LADY S. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

SIR B. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face she joins it on so badly to her neck that she looks like an ill mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head is modern though the trunk is antique.

CRAB. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew.

(SERVS. *pass around coffee, etc., and wait behind.*)

MRS. C. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

SIR B. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

LADY T. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always ajar, as it were,—thus. (*Shows her teeth.*)

MRS. C. How can you be so ill-natured?

LADY T. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were,—thus—How do you do, madam? Yes, madam. (*Mimics.*)

LADY S. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

LADY T. In defense of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry. (*Crosses to SIR B.*)

Enter SIR P. *at c.*

SIR P. (*coming down*). Ladies, your most obedient. (*Aside.*) Mercy on me; there is the whole set! A character dead at every word, I suppose.

MRS. C. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—they'll allow good qualities to nobody.

SIR P. (*L. c.*). That must be very distressing to *you*, indeed, Mrs. Candour.

MRS. C. Not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

LADY T. (*R. c.*). What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

MRS. C. Nay, but her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it you ought not to reflect on her.

LADY S. That's very true, indeed.

LADY T. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pullies; and often in the hottest noon in summer you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's, and puffing round the ring on a full trot.

MRS. C. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

SIR P. Yes, a good defense, truly!

MRS. C. But Sir Benjamin is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

CRAB. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

MRS. C. Positively, you shall not be so severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine.

ALL. Eh?

MRS. C. By marriage.

ALL. Oh!

MRS. C. And as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

LADY S. Though surely she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

MRS. C. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word

I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

SIR B. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

SIR P. (*aside*). Yes, damned good-natured! This their own relation! Mercy on me!

SIR B. And Mrs. Candour is of so moral a turn.

MRS. C. Well, I will never join ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my Cousin Ogle; and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

CRAB. Oh, to be sure! She has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

SIR B. So she has, indeed—an Irish front.

CRAB. Caledonian locks —

SIR B. Dutch nose —

CRAB. Austrian lips —

SIR B. Complexion of a Spaniard —

CRAB. And teeth *à la Chinois* — (*All laugh.*)

SIR B. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation — (*All laugh.*)

CRAB. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

MRS. C. Ha! ha! ha!

SIR P. (*aside*). Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week.

MRS. C. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle —

SIR P. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

(*Mrs. C. turns up the stage.*)

LADY S. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature,—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

SIR P. Ah! madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

LADY T. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

SIR B. Or rather, suppose them man and wife, because one so seldom sees them together.

LADY T. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal I believe he would have it put down by —

ALL. Why?

LADY T. Act of Parliament.

SIR P. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, as well as game, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

LADY S. O lud! Sir Peter, would you deprive us of our privileges?

SIR P. Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputation but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

LADY S. Go, you monster! (*Goes up stage a little.*)

MRS. C. (*coming down L.*). But surely you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

SIR P. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant for them, too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

CRAB. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

SIR B.

MRS. C.

} Never! never! never!

SIR P. Nine out of ten founded on some groundless report or malicious misrepresentation.

Enter SERV. at c. ; comes down behind SIR P. and whispers in his ear.

LADY S. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

SIR P. (*to the SERV.*). I'll be with them directly. (*Aside.*) I'll get away unperceived. (*Starts up stage.*)

Exit SERV. at c.

LADY S. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

SIR P. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.

Exit, c.

LADY T. (*calling after him*). You'd better take it with you, Sir Peter.

SIR B. Or we shall handle it most unmercifully. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being. I could tell you some stories of him that would make you laugh heartily, if he were not your husband.

LADY T. Oh, pray don't mind that;—why don't you? Come, do let's hear them.

Exit *with the rest of the company going into the next room,*
R. U. E., *leaving* JOSEPH *and* MARIA *who advance.*

JOSEPH (R. C.). Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

MARIA (L. C.). How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

JOSEPH. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

MARIA. Then is their conduct still more contemptible, for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

JOSEPH. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

MARIA. Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?

JOSEPH. Ah, Maria, you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

MARIA. Ungenerously urged! But whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother. (*Crosses R.*)

JOSEPH (*crossing L.*). Nay, but Maria, do not leave me with a frown. (*Kneels.*) By all that's honest, I swear — (*LADY T. laughs without.* JOSEPH, *aside.*) Gad's life (*rising*), here's Lady Teazle! (*Aloud.*) You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle —

MARIA. Lady Teazle!

JOSEPH. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect —

Enter LADY T., R. U. E., *and comes forward, c.*

LADY T. (*aside*). What is this, pray? (*To MARIA.*) Child, you are wanted in the next room. (*Exit MARIA, R. U. E.*) What is all this, pray? Did you take her for me?

JOSEPH (*rising*). Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

LADY T. Indeed! But you seemed to adopt a very tender method of reasoning. Do you usually argue on your knees?

JOSEPH. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast — But, Lady Teazle (*approaching nearer and speaking confidentially*), when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

LADY T. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no further than fashion requires.

JOSEPH. True, a mere platonic cicisbeo—what every London wife is entitled to.

READY change.

LADY T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so many of my country prejudices left that, though Sir Peter's ill-humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to —

JOSEPH. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

LADY T. Go; you are an insinuating wretch. (*Crosses L.*) But we shall be missed; let us join the company.

JOSEPH (*crossing R.*). But we had better not return together.

LADY T. Well, don't stay; (*up c.*) for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you.

Exit, R. U. E.

JOSEPH. A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely, I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many damn'd rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last.

Exit, c.

CHANGE set.

Scene III.—SIR P.'s. *Front set with drop.*

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROW., L. I E.

LIGHTS full up.

SIR O. (R.). Ha! ha! ha! So my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country—ha! ha! ha! That he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last.

ROW. (L.). But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

SIR O. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles,—never sees him, hey?

ROW. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

SIR O. (*crossing L.*). Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, impudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you. No, no,—if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

ROW. (*crossing R.*). Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

SIR O. What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of 'us very prudent youths; and yet I believe you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

ROW. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter. (*Goes a little up; both look off, R.*)

SIR O. Egad, so he does. Mercy on me!—he's greatly

altered and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance!

Enter SIR P., R. I E.

SIR P. (R.). Ha! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand and a thousand times!

SIR O. (*coming to c. as Row. crosses to L.*). Thank you—thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me.

SIR P. (R.). Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—fifteen years I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

SIR O. Ay, I have had my share. But what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well, it can't be helped—and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

SIR P. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into—hem!—the happy state—but we'll not talk of that now.

SIR O. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting—no, no, no.

Row. Take care, pray, sir.

SIR O. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild rogue I find, hey?

SIR P. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

SIR O. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

SIR P. What, Sir Oliver! you blame him for not making enemies?

SIR O. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

SIR P. Well, well; you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

WARN curtain.

SIR O. Oh! plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either

of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts ; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

SIR P. Oh ! my life on Joseph's honor.

SIR O. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health, and tell you our scheme.

SIR P. *Allons*, then !

SIR O. And don't, Sir Peter (*crossing to R.*), be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life ! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little ; for my part I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth ; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

RING quick curtain.

Exeunt, R. I E.

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene I.—SIR P.'s. *Front set with drop in second groove.*

LIGHTS full up.

Enter ROW., R. I E., *followed by* SIR O. *and* SIR P.

SIR P. (R.). Well, then, we shall see this fellow first, and have our wine afterward. But' how is this, Master Rowley, I don't see the jet of your scheme.

Row. (L.). Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles ; from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do ; and he is at this time endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

SIR O. (C.). Ah ! he is my brother's son.

SIR P. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to —

Row. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends, and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, “a heart to pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity.”

SIR P. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand, or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well — make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles’s affairs?

Row. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

SIR P. Pray let us have him in.

Row. (*speaking off L.*). Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

SIR P. But pray, why should you suppose he will tell the truth?

Row. Oh! I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests: I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of your prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

SIR P. I have heard too much on that subject.

(*Goes up R. C.*)

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite. (**Enter MOSES,**
L. I. E.) This is Sir Oliver.

(*Row. goes up and crosses to R. by SIR P.*)

SIR O. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

MOSES (*down stage L.*). Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I

could for him ; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

SIR O. (L. C.). That was unlucky, truly ; for you had no opportunity of showing your talents.

MOSES. None at all ; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

SIR O. Unfortunate, indeed ! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses ?

MOSES. Yes, he knows that ; this very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

SIR P. What ! One Charles never had money from before ?

(SIR P. *comes down* R. C.)

MOSES. Yes—Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

SIR P. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me ! Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium ?

MOSES. Not at all.

SIR P. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation : go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

SIR O. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterward, as old Stanley.

SIR P. True—so you may.

ROW. (*coming down* R.). Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure ; however, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful ? (*Goes up* R.)

MOSES. You may depend upon me. (*Looks at his watch.*) This is near the time I was to have gone.

SIR O. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses. But hold ! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew ?

MOSES. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

SIR O. Is he ? I'm very sorry to hear it. But then again, ain't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money lender ?

SIR P. Not at all ; 'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage, would it, Moses ?

MOSES. Not in the least. I drive a gig myself.

SIR O. Well, but how must I talk ? There's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know,

SIR P. O! there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, that's a very great point.

SIR O. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

MOSES. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

SIR O. Hey!—what the plague!—how much, then?

MOSES. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

SIR O. (*turning to SIR P.*). You may ask him double!

(*Laughs.*)

SIR P. A good honest trade you're learning; Sir Oliver.

SIR O. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

MOSES. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him from a friend.

SIR O. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

MOSES. Yes; and your friend is an unconscionable dog; but you can't help that.

SIR O. My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

MOSES. Yes, and he himself has not the money by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

SIR O. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

SIR P. I'faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade.

SIR O. Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

SIR P. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

SIR O. O! never fear; my tutor appears so able that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

Exeunt SIR O. and MOSES, L. I E., the latter turning at door to bow respectfully to SIR P.

SIR P. (L. c.). So now I think Sir Oliver will be con-

vinced. You are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

ROW. (R. C.). No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

SIR P. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say, presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. (Exit ROW., R. I E.) I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph. I am determined I will do it; he will give me his opinion sincerely. (Crosses R. Enter MARIA, L. I E.) So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

MARIA (L.). No, sir; he was engaged.

SIR P. (R.). Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

MARIA. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely; you compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

SIR P. So—here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

MARIA. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him; I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

SIR P. Well, well, pity him as much as you please, but give your heart and hand to a worthy object. (Crosses L.)

MARIA (crossing R.). Never to his brother.

SIR P. Go—perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is; don't compel me to inform you of it.

MARIA. I can only say you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute, but I must cease to think you so when you would compel me to be miserable.

Exit, R. I E.

SIR P. (C.). Was ever man so crossed as I am? Everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight before her father, a hale and hearty

man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. (LADY T. *sings without at R.*) But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good-humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY T., R. I E.

LADY T. (R.). Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarreling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

SIR P. (L.). Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

LADY T. I am sure I wish I had, for I want you to be in a monstrous sweet temper at this moment. (*Comes close to him and lays hand on his arm.*) Do be good-humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

SIR P. Two hundred pounds! What, ain't I to be in a good-humor without paying a monstrous good price for it? But speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it. (*Gives her notes.*) But seal me a bond of repayment.

LADY T. O no—there—my note of hand will do as well.

(*Offers her hand.*)

SIR P. (*kissing her hand*). I honor the acceptance. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you:—but shall we always live thus, hey?

LADY T. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarreling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

SIR P. Well, then, let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

(*She takes his arm and they walk to and fro.*)

LADY T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good-nature becomes you; you look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you? Didn't you? Didn't you?

SIR P. Yes, yes, and you were kind and attentive—

LADY T. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you and turn you into ridicule.

SIR P. Indeed! Hem!

LADY T. Ay, and when my Cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means.

SIR P. Thank you.

LADY T. And I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

SIR P. And you prophesied right: and we shall now be the happiest couple —

(*They pause at C.—LADY T. at R., SIR P. at L.*)

LADY T. And never differ again?

SIR P. }

LADY T. }

hand in hand. { Never—never, never.

SIR P. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always begin first.

LADY T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter; indeed, you always gave the provocation.

SIR P. Now see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

LADY T. Then don't you begin it, my love!

SIR P. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

LADY T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear —

SIR P. There! now you want to quarrel again.

LADY T. No, I am sure I don't:—but if you will be so peevish —

SIR P. There now! who begins first?

LADY T. Why you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

SIR P. No, no, madam; the fault's in your own temper.

LADY T. Ay, you are just what my Cousin Sophy said you would be.

SIR P. Your Cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

LADY T. You are a great bear!

SIR P. A what?

LADY T. You're a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

SIR P. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me if ever I try to be friends with you any more.

LADY T. So much the better.

SIR P. No, no, madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest 'squires in the neighborhood.

LADY T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty only because he

READY change.

never could meet with any one who would have him.

(Crosses L.)

SIR P. (c.). Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me: you never had such an offer before.

LADY T. No; didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married. (Crosses R.)

SIR P. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are not without foundation —

(Crosses L.)

LADY T. (*crossing* R.). Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

SIR P. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please!

LADY T. Separate maintenance. Yes, a separate maintenance. (*Laughs.*)

SIR P. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors.

LADY T. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple—

and never differ again, you know—ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so by-bye. (*Crosses to door at R. Turns back.*) Sir Peter (*imitating him*), never, never, never differ again.

(*Laughs and exit, R. I E.*)

SIR P. Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper: no! she may break my heart but she shan't keep her temper.

Exit, R. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene II.—CHARLES SURFACE'S house. *Front set in first groove.*

LIGHTS full up.

Enter TRIP, SIR O. and MOSES, L. I E.

TRIP (R.). Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

SIR O. (C.). Mr. Moses, what is my name?

MOSES (L.). Mr. Premium.

TRIP. Premium—very well.

Exit TRIP, *taking snuff*, R. I E.

SIR O. (R.). To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure this was my brother's house?

MOSES (L.). Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, etc., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

SIR O. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Reënter TRIP, R. I E.

TRIP (R.). My master says you must wait, gentlemen: he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

SIR O. (R. C.). If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message.

TRIP. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium, no, no, no.

SIR O. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

TRIP. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

SIR O. Well then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

TRIP. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great, either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

SIR O. (*aside*). Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinaoes! (*Crosses R.*)

TRIP (*crossing to L. C. to MOSES*). And, *à propos*, Moses—have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

SIR O. (*aside*). Wants to raise money, too! Mercy on me! Has his distresses, too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

MOSES (L.). 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

(*Gives TRIP the note.*)

TRIP (C.). Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has endorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

MOSES. No! 'twouldn't do.

TRIP. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee; Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

SIR O. (R., *aside*). An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done; luxury, egad!

MOSES. Well, but you must insure your place.

READY change.

TRIP. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

SIR O. (*aside*). It's more than I would your neck.

MOSES. But is there nothing you could deposit?

TRIP. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; (*bell rings, R.*) but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit on the blue and silver. (*Bell rings, R.*)

These, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security— (*Bell rings, R.*) Egad (*crossing R.*), I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses. This way, gentlemen. I'll insure my place, you know.

SIR O. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation, indeed!

Exeunt, R. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene III.—*Antique Hall. Banquet table at c., running down stage from back to front. One chair at head of table for CHARLES SURFACE, and three on each side; a super, SIR HARRY BUMPER and CARELESS seated R. of table; super, SIR B. and CRAB., L. A few chairs R. and L. Supper just over.*

LIGHTS full up.

CHARLES (*seated at the head of the table*). 'Fore heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink wine.

CARE. (*seated R. of table*). It is so indeed, Charles. They give into all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.

CHARLES. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably: for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulency of champagne, without its spirit or flavor.

SIR H. (*seated R. of table*). But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

CARE. True. There's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

CHARLES. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad! I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose.

ALL. Hey, what?

CHARLES. At least, I never feel my losses.

ALL. Oh!

CHARLES. Which is exactly the same thing.

CARE. Ay, that I believe.

CHARLES. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top is the maid that has bewitched you.

CARE. Now, then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

CHARLES. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible —

ALL. Oh!

CHARLES. On earth!

CARE. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals, or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant.

CHARLES. Here, then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! (*Rises and holds up his glass.*) Maria! Maria!

SIR H. Maria who?

CHARLES. Oh, damn the surname!—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar;—Maria!

ALL. Maria! (*They drink.*)

SIR B. Down goes Maria.

CARE. Maria is drunk.

CHARLES. But now, Careless, your song. Beware, we must have beauty superlative.

SIR H. You know you have a song will excuse you.

CARE. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady. (*Sings.*)

SONG

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen :

Here's to the widow of fifty :

Here's to the flaunting extravagant queen,

And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass,—

Drink to the lass,

I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize,
 Now to the maid who has none, sir ;
 Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
 And here's the nymph with but *one*, sir.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow ;
 Now to her that's as brown as a berry :
 Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
 And now to the damsel that's merry.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

Enter TRIP *at R. 2 E. ; whispers to CHARLES.*

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
 Young or ancient, I care not a feather ;
 So fill up your glasses, nay, fill to the brim,
 And let us e'en toast them together.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, etc.

ALL. Bravo ! Bravo !

CHARLES. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. Careless, take the chair, will you ?

CARE. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now ? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropt in by chance ?

CHARLES. No, faith ! To tell the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

CARE. O damn it ! let's have the Jew in.

SIR H. Ay, and the broker, too, by all means.

CARE. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

CHARLES. Egad, with all my heart ! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in (*exit* TRIP, R. 2 E.)—though there's one of them a stranger, I can assure you.

CARE. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

CHARLES. O hang 'em, no ! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities ; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery. (*Enter* TRIP, R. 2 E., *followed by* SIR O. *and* MOSES. MOSES *and* SIR O. *cross to L.*) So, hon-

est Moses, walk in; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, sir.

CHARLES. Set chairs, Trip (*TRIP crosses behind table and brings chairs to SIR O. and MOSES down L.*)—sit down, Mr. Premium—glasses, Trip—sit down, Moses. (*They sit to L.*) Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!*—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

MOSES. *Success to usury!*

CARE. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

SIR O. Then here's—*All the success it deserves!*

CARE. (*rising, and coming forward*). No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

SIR H. A pint bumper, at least.

MOSES. O pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

(*MOSES and SIR O. rise.*)

CARE. And therefore loves good wine.

SIR H. Give Moses a quart glass; this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

CHARLES (*rising*). No, hang it, you shan't! Mr. Premium's a stranger.

CARE. Plague on 'em, then!—if they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. (*Down extreme R.*) Come, Harry (*men remaining at table all rise*), the dice are in the next room—Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

CHARLES (C.). I will. I will. (*Exeunt all the GENTLEMEN, R. 2 E., CARE. last.*) Careless!

CARE. (*returning to R. C.*). Well?

CHARLES. Perhaps I may want you.

CARE. Oh, you know I am always ready: word or bond, 'tis all the same to me.

Exit, R. 2 E.

MOSES (L. C.). Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is —

CHARLES (*taking MOSES by the ear and putting him across R., SIR O. stepping forward to L. C.*). Pshaw! have done. Sir,

my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression : he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this : I am an extravagant young fellow, who wants to borrow money—you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who has got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it ; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

SIR O. (*aside*). Exceeding frank, upon my word. (*Aloud*.) I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

CHARLES. Oh, no, sir ; plain dealing in business I always think best.

SIR O. Sir, I like you the better for it—however, you are mistaken in one thing ; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend ; but then he's an unconscionable dog—isn't he, Moses ?

MOSES. Oh, yes, sir.

SIR O. And must sell stock to accommodate you—mustn't he, Moses ?

MOSES. Yes, indeed ! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie !

CHARLES. Right. People that speak truth generally do : but these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What ! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't !

SIR O. Well—but what security could you give ? You have no land, I suppose ?

CHARLES. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window !

SIR O. Nor any stock, I presume ?

CHARLES. Nothing but live-stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections ?

SIR O. Why, to say truth, I am.

CHARLES. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

SIR O. That you have a rich uncle I have heard ; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

CHARLES. Oh, no !—there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

SIR O. Indeed ! this is the first I've heard of it.

CHARLES. Yes, yes, 'tis just so—Moses knows 'tis true, don't you, Moses ?

MOSES. I'll take my oath on it.

SIR O. (*aside*). Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

CHARLES. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life : though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word I should be sorry to hear anything had happened to him.

(*During following dialogue, business for MOSES, up stage, taking inventory of silver on table.*)

SIR O. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

CHARLES. Oh, yes, you would ; the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

SIR O. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

CHARLES. What ! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life ?

SIR O. No, indeed, I am not ; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

CHARLES. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor Uncle Oliver ! Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him !

SIR O. No ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! egad—ha ! ha ! ha !

CHARLES. Ha ! ha !—you're glad to hear that, little Premium ?

SIR O. No, no, I'm not.

CHARLES. Yes, yes, you are—ha ! ha ! ha ! You know that mends your chance.

SIR O. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over ; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

CHARLES. Pshaw ! Sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't, he's at this moment at Calcutta—isn't he, Moses ?

MOSES. Oh, yes, I'll take my oath of it.

SIR O. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority—haven't I, Moses?

MOSES (*coming down R.*). I'll take my oath of it.

SIR O. But, sir, as I understand, you want a few hundreds immediately—is there nothing you could dispose of?

CHARLES (C.). How do you mean?

SIR O. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate?

CHARLES. O Lud!—that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

MOSES. I popped them into the crucible.

(*Goes up stage again.*)

SIR O. (*aside*). Good luck! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls. (*Aloud.*) Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and complete.

CHARLES. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself. (*Crosses R.*)

SIR O. (*crossing to C. ; aside*). Mercy upon me! Learning that had run in the family like an heirloom! (*Aloud.*) Pray, what are become of the books?

CHARLES (R.). You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

MOSES (*coming down L.*). I know nothing of books, but the book of interest.

SIR O. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

CHARLES. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad, you shall have 'em at a bargain.

SIR O. Hey! what the devil! Sure you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

CHARLES. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

SIR O. What! your great uncles and aunts.

CHARLES. Ay, and my great grandfathers and grandmothers too.

SIR O. (*aside*). Now I give him up. (*Aloud.*) What the

plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life, do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

CHARLES. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry. What need you care if you have your money's worth?

SIR O. Well, I'll be the purchaser; I think I can dispose of the family canvases. (*Aside.*) Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

Enter CARE., R. 2 E., with dice-box in his hand:

CARE. (*extreme R.*). Come, Charles, what keeps you?

CHARLES (R. C.). I can't come yet; I faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

WARN curtain.

CARE. Oh, burn your ancestors.

CHARLES. No, he may do that afterward, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you; egad, you shall be auctioneer; so come along with us.

CARE. (*coming down R.*). Oh, have with you, if that's the case. I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box! Going! going!

SIR O. (*aside, at L. c.*). Oh, the profligates!

CHARLES. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

SIR O. O yes, I do, vastly. Ha! ha! ha! Yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha! (*Aside.*) O the prodigal!

CHARLES. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations?

SIR O. I'll never forgive him: never! never!

RING quick curtain.

Exeunt, R. 2 E., CHARLES and CARE. laughing together,
SIR O. shaking his head, and MOSES rubbing his hands.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Scene I.—*Picture room in CHARLES'S house. Large chair on L. 2 E. Family pedigree hanging up in the wing, R.*

Enter CHARLES, SIR O., MOSES and CARE., L. 1 E.

LIGHTS full up.

CHARLES (*crossing to R.*). Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in; here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

SIR O. (*following to R. C.*). And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

CHARLES (*viewing the pictures*). Ay, ay, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontière grace* or expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

SIR O. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

CHARLES. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose. (*Brings chair forward, C.*)

CARE. (*mounting chair*). Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

CHARLES. Egad, that's true. (*Takes pedigree down from R. 1 W.*) What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless, you shall have no common piece of mahogany; here's the family tree for you, you rogue—this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree. (*Gives it to CARE.*)

SIR O. (*crossing to L. C., aside*). What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto* parricide!

CARE. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation, indeed;

faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. (*Rolls parchment up.*) Come, begin. A-going, a-going, a-going!

CHARLES. Bravo, Careless! Well (*looking around room and beginning at R. wall*), here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvelous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium? Look at him—there's a hero, not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

SIR O. (*aside to MOSES, who remains at L. a little up stage*). Bid him speak.

MOSES. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

CHARLES. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

SIR O. (*aside*). Heaven deliver me! His famous Uncle Richard for ten pounds! (*Aloud.*) Very well, sir, I take him at that.

CHARLES. Careless, knock down my Uncle Richard. Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

SIR O. (*aside*). Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself! (*Aloud.*) Five pounds ten—she's mine.

CHARLES. Knock down my Aunt Deborah, Careless!

MOSES. The old woman and the little muttens five pounds ten shillings.

CHARLES. This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well-known on the western circuit. What do you rate him at, Moses?

MOSES. Four guineas. (*Comes c.*)

CHARLES. Four guineas!—Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig. Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woosack; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

SIR O. By all means.

CHARLES. Knock down the judge.

CARE. Gone!

(MOSES has by this time got directly in front of CARE., who, as the Jew makes notes in his book of the sale, knocks him on the head with the pedigree.)

MOSES. Do you take me for the judge?

CARE. You look more like the criminal.

(MOSES goes L.)

CHARLES. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

SIR O. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

CARE. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

CHARLES. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was Mayor of Norwich; take him at eight pounds.

SIR O. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

CHARLES. Come, make it guineas, and I throw the two aldermen there into the bargain.

SIR O. They're mine.

CHARLES. Careless, knock down the mayor and the aldermen. But plague on't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale. What say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds, and take all that remains on each side in a lump.

CARE. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

(Comes down from chair.)

SIR O. Well, well, anything to accommodate you:—they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

(Crosses to C. CHARLES goes R. to picture of SIR O., dusts it affectionately with his handkerchief, and comes down R.)

CARE. (having put the chair away comes forward, L.) What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

SIR O. (C.). Yes, yes, I mean that, though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow by any means.

CHARLES. What, that? (CARE. goes up R. to picture.) Oh! that's my Uncle Oliver; 'twas done before he went to India.

CARE. Your Uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. (*Comes down c.*) Don't you think so, little Premium?

(*Slaps him on the shoulder.*)

SIR O. (*to CARE.*). Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. (*To CHARLES.*) But I suppose Uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

CHARLES (*R.*). No, hang it; I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in. (*Crosses L.*)

SIR O. (*down R., aside*). The rogue's my nephew, after all! (*Aloud.*) But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

CHARLES (*L.*). I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

SIR O. (*aside*). I forgive him everything! (*Aloud.*) But, sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

CHARLES. Don't tease me, master broker: I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

SIR O. (*aside*). How like his father the dog is! (*Aloud.*) Well, well, I have done. (*Aside.*) I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a resemblance. (*Aloud.*) Here is a draft for your sum.

(*Takes it out of his pocketbook. Goes to R. C.*)

CHARLES (*coming c. and taking it*). Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds.

SIR O. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

CHARLES. Zounds! no!—I tell you once more.

SIR O. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time—but give me your hand on the bargain. You are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg your pardon, sir, for being so free. Come, Moses. (*Crosses L.*)

CHARLES (*R.*). Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow! But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen?

SIR O. (*L.*). Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

CHARLES. But hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for

them, for I assure you they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

SIR O. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

CHARLES. Ay, all but the little nabob.

SIR O. You're fixed on that?

CHARLES. Peremptorily.

SIR O. (*aside*). A dear extravagant rogue! But he wouldn't sell my picture. (*Aloud*.) Good day!—Come, Moses. (*Aside*.) Let me hear now who dares call him profligate!

Exeunt SIR O. and MOSES, L. I E.

CARE. (R.). Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever met with.

CHARLES (C.). Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. (*Knock at L.*) But hark! here's Rowley; do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

CARE. I will; don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

CHARLES (L.). Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them. Ay, ay, never fear. (**Exit CARE., R. I E.**) So! this was an odd fellow, indeed. Let me see—two-thirds of this, five hundred and thirty odd pounds, are mine by right. 'Fore heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for! Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant. (*Bows ceremoniously to*

READY change.

the pictures and crosses C. **Enter ROW., L. I E.**) Hah! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

ROW. (L.). Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

CHARLES (C.). Why, there's the point; my distresses are so many that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure 'tis very affecting, but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Row. There's no making you serious a moment.

CHARLES. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Row. A hundred pounds! Consider only —

CHARLES. Gad's life, don't talk about it; poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Row. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb —

CHARLES. "Be just before you're generous." Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity for the soul of me.

Row. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection —

CHARLES. Ay, ay, it's very true; but hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven I'll give; so damn your economy, and away to old Stanley with the money.

Exeunt CHARLES, R. I E., ROW., L. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene II.—*A saloon. Front set drop in first groove.*

Enter MOSES and SIR O., R. I E.

LIGHTS full up.

MOSES (L.). Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

SIR O. (C.). But he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And loves wine and women so much.

SIR O. But he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And he games so deep.

SIR O. But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter ROW., R. I E.

Row. (R.). So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase —

SIR O. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Row. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

MOSES (L.). Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Row. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

SIR O. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence, too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

READY change.

Row. Not yet a while; Sir Peter, I know, meant to call there about this time.

Enter TRIP, R. I E.

TRIP. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way. (*Crosses L.*) Moses, a word.

(*Takes MOSES by necktie and pulls him off, L. I E.*)

Exeunt TRIP and MOSES, L. I E.

SIR O. (L.). There's a fellow for you—would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Row. (R.). Indeed!

SIR O. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah! Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters when they were worn a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on.

Exeunt, L. I E.

CHANGE set.

Scene III.—*Library at JOSEPH'S. At R. Pembroke table with books. Chair stands at L. of it. Antique chairs at R. and L. Large window at back and before it—a little to R.—screen on front of which hangs map.*

READY knock.

LIGHTS full up.

(JOSEPH and a SERV. discovered.)

JOSEPH (C.). No letter from Lady Teazle?

SERV. (L.). No, sir.

JOSEPH. I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I hope I may not lose the heiress through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

KNOCK off L.

(Knocking heard without L.)

SERV. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

JOSEPH. Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

SERV. (*looking from window up stage*). 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street. (*Comes down L.*)

JOSEPH. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window (*SERV. does so*),—that will do;—my opposite neighbor is a lady of a curious temper. (*Exit SERV., L. 2 E.*) I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into the secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power.

(*Sits at table at R.*)

Enter LADY T., L. 2 E., preceded by SERV., who stands aside, bowing at door.

LADY T. (L. C.). What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before. (*Crosses C.*)

JOSEPH (R.). Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

(*He beckons SERV. who places chairs; JOSEPH sits after LADY T. is seated. Exit SERV., L. 2 E.*)

LADY T. (L.). Upon my word you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

JOSEPH (*aside*). I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

LADY T. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced ; don't you, Mr. Surface ?

JOSEPH (*aside*). Indeed I do not. (*Aloud.*) Oh, certainly I do ; for then my dear Lady Teazle would be also convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

LADY T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking to have the most ill-natured things said of one ? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation, too—that's what vexes me.

JOSEPH. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation ; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed ; for when a scandalous tale is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

LADY T. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice ; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend ; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed, 'tis monstrous !

JOSEPH. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to endeavor to outwit him.

LADY T. Indeed !—so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't.

JOSEPH. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you,—and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

LADY T. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable ; and when the consciousness of my innocence —

JOSEPH. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake : 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion ? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences ?

Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? Why, the consciousness of your innocence.

LADY T. 'Tis very true!

JOSEPH. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

LADY T. Do you think so?

JOSEPH. Oh! I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once; for, in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

LADY T. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is that I must sin in my own defense, and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation.

JOSEPH. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

LADY T. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

JOSEPH. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

LADY T. Why, if my understanding were once convinced —

JOSEPH. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

LADY T. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the argument? (*Rises.*)

JOSEPH. Ah! the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you. (*Rises.*)

LADY T. I doubt they do, indeed; and I will fairly own to you that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill-usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

JOSEPH. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of — (*Taking her hand, is about to kneel when SERV. enters L. I E.*) 'Sdeath, you blockhead; what do you want?

SERV. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

JOSEPH. Sir Peter! Oons—the devil!

LADY T. Sir Peter! O Lud—I'm ruined—I'm ruined!

SERV. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

LADY T. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of

me? Now, Mr. Logic—— Oh! mercy, sir, he's on the stairs. I'll get behind here, and if ever I'm so imprudent again ——

(*Goes behind screen.*)

JOSEPH (*to SERV.*). Give me that book.

(*Sits down, R. C. ; SERV. pretends to adjust his chair.*)

Enter SIR P., L. I E.

SIR P. (*aside, at door*). Ay, ever improving himself. Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface.

(*Crosses and taps JOSEPH on the shoulder.*)

JOSEPH (*starting up as if surprised*). Oh! my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon (*gaping—throws book to SERV. who catches it*)—I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

SIR P. (*c., looking about*). 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper. (*Walks up toward screen.*) And you can even make your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps?

JOSEPH (*following him*). Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

(*Turns SIR P. from the screen, and brings him down c.*)

SIR P. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

JOSEPH (*aside*). Aye, or to hide anything in a hurry, either.

SIR P. Well, I have a little private business ——

JOSEPH (*to the SERV. who places chairs*). You need not stay. (*Exit SERV., L. I E.*) Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg —— (*SIR P. sits L. C., JOSEPH R. C.*)

SIR P. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

JOSEPH. Indeed, I am very sorry to hear it.

SIR P. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard

for me ; but what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

JOSEPH. Indeed ! You astonish me !

SIR P. Yes ; and, between ourselves, I think I've hit on the very man. (*Lays his hand on JOSEPH'S knee.*)

JOSEPH (*starting*). How ? (*Recovers himself.*) You alarm me exceedingly.

SIR P. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me !

JOSEPH. Yes—believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

SIR P. I am convinced of it. Ah ! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean ?

JOSEPH. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite ?

SIR P. Oh, no ! What say you to Charles ?

JOSEPH. My brother ! Impossible !

SIR P. Oh ! my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

JOSEPH. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

SIR P. True—but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

JOSEPH. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

SIR P. Ay,—but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow ?

JOSEPH. That's very true.

SIR P. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me ; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor who had married a girl.

JOSEPH. That's true, to be sure—they would laugh.

SIR P. Laugh—ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

JOSEPH. No, you must never make it public.

SIR P. But then, that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

JOSEPH. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

SIR P. Ay—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian ; in whose house he has been so often entertained ; who never in my life denied him—any advice.

JOSEPH. Oh, 'tis not to be credited. There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure ; but for my part till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him : for the man who can break through the laws of hospitality and tempt the wife of his friend deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

SIR P. What a difference there is between you ! What noble sentiments !

JOSEPH. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

SIR P. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her : and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect, for the future ; and if I were to die she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live ; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

(Overcome with emotion draws out handkerchief and wipes tears from his eyes.)

JOSEPH. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous. *(Repeats SIR P.'s business with handkerchief, from behind which he says, aside.)* I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

SIR P. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet a while.

JOSEPH. Nor I, if I could help it.

SIR P. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

JOSEPH *(softly)*. Oh, no, Sir Peter ; another time, if you please.

SIR P. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

JOSEPH. I beg you will not mention it, sir. What are my

disappointments when your happiness is in debate? (*Aside.*) 'Sdeath! I will be ruined every way.

SIR P. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

JOSEPH. Pray, Sir Peter, now, oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is intrusted with his friend's distresses can never — (*Enter SERV., L. I E.*) Well, sir?

SERV. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

JOSEPH (*rising*). 'Sdeath, blockhead (*crossing to SERV. at L.*), I'm not within—I'm out for the day.

SIR P. (*rising and putting back chairs*). Stay—hold—a thought has struck me! You shall be at home.

JOSEPH (*crossing R.*). Well, well, let him up. (*Exit SERV., L. I E.* JOSEPH, *aside.*) He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

SIR P. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere—then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

JOSEPH (*L.*). O fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick? To trepan my brother, too?

SIR P. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: (*going up*) here, behind the screen will be — (*JOSEPH follows SIR P. quickly to screen and catches his coat-tail just in season to prevent his going behind. They come down stage step by step looking each other in the face.*) Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener here already; I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

JOSEPH. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph, either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner—a silly rogue that plagues me,—and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

SIR P. (*slyly*). Ah! Joseph! Joseph! Did I ever think that you — But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

JOSEPH. Oh, 'twill never go further, you may depend upon it. She doesn't speak a word of English.

SIR P. No? then, faith, let her hear it out. Here's a closet will do as well.

JOSEPH. Well, go in there.

SIR P. Sly rogue! sly rogue! (*Goes into the closet, R.*)

JOSEPH (*at c.*). A narrow escape, indeed; and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

LADY T. (*peeping*). Couldn't I steal off?

JOSEPH. Keep close, my angel!

(LADY T. *draws back.*)

SIR P. (*peeping out, R.*). Joseph, tax him home.

JOSEPH. Back, my dear friend!

(SIR P. *closes door.*)

LADY T. Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

JOSEPH. Be still, my life!

(LADY T. *withdraws.*)

SIR P. (*peeping*). You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

JOSEPH. In, in, my dear Sir Peter. 'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

(SIR P. *closes door just as enter CHARLES, L. I E.*)

CHARLES. Holloa! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

JOSEPH (*R. C.*). Neither, brother, I assure you.

CHARLES (*L.*). But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

JOSEPH. He *was*, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

CHARLES (*L. C.*). What? was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

JOSEPH. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, that you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

CHARLES. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

JOSEPH. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

CHARLES. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! So the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he? And what's worse, has the lady found out that she's got an old husband!

JOSEPH. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh —

CHARLES. True, true, as you were going to say; then seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

JOSEPH. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

CHARLES. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement:—besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

JOSEPH. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you —

CHARLES. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way, and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father —

JOSEPH. Well —

CHARLES. Why, I believe I should be obliged to —

(Leans on JOSEPH'S shoulder.)

JOSEPH. What?

CHARLES (*meeekly*). To borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for i'faith I always understood you were her favorite.

JOSEPH. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

CHARLES. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances —

JOSEPH. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

CHARLES. Egad, I'm serious. Don't you remember one day when I called here —

JOSEPH. Nay, prithee, Charles —

(Puts his hand on CHARLES'S mouth to stop him.)

CHARLES (*removing JOSEPH'S hand*). And found you together —

JOSEPH. Zounds, sir! I insist —

CHARLES. And another time, when your servant —

JOSEPH. Brother, brother, a word with you! (*Aside.*) Gad, I must stop him.

CHARLES. Informed, I say, that —

JOSEPH. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has heard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

CHARLES. How, Sir Peter? Where is he?

JOSEPH. Softly; there! (*Points to the closet, R.*)

CHARLES. Oh, 'fore heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth! (*Tries to get to the closet.*)

JOSEPH. No, no — (*Prevents him.*)

CHARLES (*throwing JOSEPH to L.*). I say, Sir Peter, come into court. (*Crosses R.; pulls in SIR P.*) What! my old guardian! What!—turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog? Oh, fie! Oh, fie!

SIR P. (R. C.). Give me your hand, Charles; I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

CHARLES (C.). Indeed!

SIR P. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did: what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

CHARLES (*apart to JOSEPH*). Egad then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more; wasn't it, Joseph?

SIR P. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

CHARLES. Ay, ay, that was a joke.

SIR P. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

CHARLES. But you might as well suspect *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that. (*Apert to JOSEPH.*) Mightn't he, Joseph?

SIR P. Well, well, I believe you.

JOSEPH (L., *aside*). Would they were both out of the room!

SIR P. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

Enter SERV., L. I E.

SERV. (*aside to JOSEPH*). Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

JOSEPH (*aside*). Lady Sneerwell! Gad's life! she must not come here! (*Exit SERV., L. I E.*) Gentlemen — (*SIR P. edges up toward screen.*) Sir Peter! (*He comes down C., and CHARLES goes up to screen.*) I beg pardon; I must wait on you down-stairs. Charles! (*CHARLES leaves screen and comes down R.*) Here is a person come on particular business.

CHARLES. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met for a long time, and I have something to say to him.

JOSEPH (*aside*). They must not be left together. I'll send Lady Sneerwell away, and return directly. (*Apart to SIR P., who is again up near the screen. This business may be continued as long as the audience will respond to it.*) Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

SIR P. (*crossing, and apart to JOSEPH*). I! Not for the world! (*Exit JOSEPH, L. I E. SIR P. returns L. C., to CHARLES.*) Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

CHARLES (R. C.). Pshaw! he is too moral by half, and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

SIR P. No, no. Come, come, you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect. (*Aside.*) I have a great mind to tell him—we should have such a laugh at Joseph.

CHARLES. Oh, hang him! He's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

SIR P. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

CHARLES. Why, you won't tell him?

SIR P. No—but—this way. (*Aside.*) Egad, I'll tell him. (*Aloud.*) Hark'ee—have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

CHARLES. I should like it of all things.

SIR P. (*aside*). Then damn me if I don't tell him. (*Aloud.*) Then i'faith, we will—I'll be quit with him for discovering me. (*Brings CHARLES down stage.*) He had a girl with him when I called.

CHARLES. What! Joseph? You jest.

SIR P. Hush!—a little French milliner—she doesn't speak a word of English—and the best of the jest is, she's in the room now.

CHARLES. The devil she is! (*Looks at closet.*)

SIR P. Hush! I tell you! (*Points to screen.*)

CHARLES. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unvail her.

(*Up stage.*)

SIR P. (*trying to prevent him*). No, no—he's coming; you shan't, indeed!

CHARLES. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner.

(*Endeavors to get toward screen, SIR P. preventing.*)

SIR P. Not for the world; Joseph will never forgive me —

CHARLES. I'll stand by you —

(*Thrusts SIR P. to R., and rushes to screen.*)

SIR P. Odds, here he is!

Enter JOSEPH, L. I E., *just as CHARLES throws down the screen.*

CHARLES (L. C.). Lady Teazle! by all that's wonderful!

JOSEPH (L.). Lady Teazle! by all that's horrible!

SIR P. (R.). Lady Teazle! by all that's damnable!

CHARLES. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word! I beg your pardon, you don't speak a word of English. Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb, too! Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! Well, though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another—so I'll leave you to yourselves. (*Going.*) Brother (*mimicking JOSEPH*), I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Exit, L. I E. *They stand for some time looking at each other.*

JOSEPH (L.). Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

SIR P. (R.). If you please, sir.

JOSEPH. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward, Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say,—called here—in order

that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—and hearing your carriage coming up the stairs—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is a clear account of the matter.

SIR P. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY T. (*coming forward, c.*). For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

SIR P. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie!

LADY T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

SIR P. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

JOSEPH (*aside*). 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

LADY T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

SIR P. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

LADY T. Hear me, Sir Peter! I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of the gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

WARN curtain.

SIR P. Now, I believe, the truth is coming, indeed.

JOSEPH. The woman's mad!

LADY T. No, sir, she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me, but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. (*Crosses to L.*) As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

Exit, L. I E.

JOSEPH. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows —

SIR P. (*crossing L.*). That you are a villain ! and so I leave you to your conscience.

JOSEPH. You are too rash, Sir Peter ; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to ——

SIR P. Oh, damn your sentiments !

RING quick curtain.

Exit SIR P., L. I E., followed by JOSEPH, talking.

CURTAIN

—
ACT V

Scene I.—The Library.

(*Discovered JOSEPH and SERV.*)

LIGHTS full up.

JOSEPH (L.). Mr. Stanley !—and why should you think I would see him ? You must know he comes to ask something.

SERV. (R.). Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

JOSEPH. Pshaw ! blockhead ! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations ! Well, why don't you show the fellow up ?

SERV. I will, sir. Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady ——

JOSEPH. Go, fool ! (**Exit SERV., L.**) Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment ! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses ! I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley. So, here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however.

Exit, R. I E.

Enter SIR O. and ROW., L. I E.

SIR O. What ! does he avoid us ! That was he, was it not ?

Row. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

SIR O. (R.). Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Row. (L.). As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

SIR O. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments, I suppose, at his fingers' ends.

Row. Or rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that "Charity begins at home."

SIR O. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Row. I doubt you'll find it so;—but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know immediately as you leave him I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

SIR O. True; and afterward you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Row. Without losing a moment.

Exit, L. I E.

SIR O. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH, R. I E.

JOSEPH (R.). Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

SIR O. (L.). At your service.

JOSEPH. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir!

(Places chair for SIR O. at L. C., and sits himself by table at R.)

SIR O. Dear sir—there's no occasion. *(Aside.)* Too civil by half!

JOSEPH. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, Mr. Stanley, I think?

SIR O. I was, sir;—so nearly that my present poverty, I

fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

JOSEPH. Dear sir, there needs no apology :—he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was one of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

SIR O. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

JOSEPH. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart : you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

SIR O. I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

JOSEPH. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man ; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing ; though people, I know, have thought otherwise ; and, for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

SIR O. What ! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas ?

JOSEPH. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no—a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats, and Indian crackers—little more, believe me.

SIR O. (*aside*). Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds !—Avadavats and Indian crackers !

JOSEPH. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother : there are few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

SIR O. (*aside*). Not I, for one !

JOSEPH. The sums that I have lent him ! Indeed, I have been exceedingly to blame ; it was an amiable weakness ; however, I don't pretend to defend it,—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

SIR O. (*aside*). Dissembler ! (*Aloud.*) Then, sir, you can't assist me ? (*Rises and crosses to L.*)

JOSEPH (*rising and crossing down R.*). At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot ; but whenever I have the ability you may depend upon hearing from me.

SIR O. I am extremely sorry —

JOSEPH. Not more than I, believe me ;—to pity without the power to relieve is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

SIR O. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

JOSEPH. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.
(*Calls off L.*) William, be ready to open the door.

SIR O. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

JOSEPH. Your very obedient.

SIR O. Sir, your most obsequious.

JOSEPH. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

SIR O. Sweet sir, you are too good !

JOSEPH. In the meantime, I wish you health and spirits.

SIR O. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

JOSEPH. Sir, yours as sincerely.

SIR O. (*aside*). Now I am satisfied ! Charles, you are my heir !

Exit, L. I E.

JOSEPH. This is one bad effect of a good character ; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities ; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

Enter Row., L. I E.

Row. (L.). Mr. Surface, your servant. I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

JOSEPH (R.). Always happy to see Mr. Rowley. (*Aside.*) A rascal ! (*Reads the letter.*) Sir Oliver Surface ! My uncle arrived !

Row. He is, indeed : we have just parted with him—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

JOSEPH. I am astonished ! (*Calls off L.*) William, stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

READY change.

Row. Oh ! he's out of reach, I believe.

JOSEPH. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together ?

Row. I thought you had particular business ; but I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

JOSEPH. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming. (*Aside.*) Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky.

ROW. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

JOSEPH. Oh! I am overjoyed to hear it (*aside*)—just at this time.

ROW. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Exit, L. I. E.

JOSEPH. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. (**Exit ROW., L. I. E.**) Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill-fortune!

Exit, R. I. E.

CHANGE set.

Scene II.—A room in SIR P.'s house.

(*Discovered MRS. C.*)

LIGHTS full up.

MRS. C. Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses. (**Enter SIR B., L. I. E.**) Oh, dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose—

SIR B. (L.). Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface—

MRS. C. (R.). And Sir Peter's discovery—

SIR B. Oh! the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

MRS. C. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am sorry for all parties, indeed.

SIR B. Now I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

MRS. C. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

SIR B. No such thing, I tell you—Mr. Surface is the gallant.

MRS. C. No, no, Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

SIR B. I tell you I had it from one—

MRS. C. And I have it from one—

SIR B. Who had it from one, who had it ——

MRS. C. From one immediately—but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

(Crosses c. SIR B. crosses to R.)

Enter LADY S., L. I E.

LADY S. (L.). So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Teazle.

MRS. C. (C.). Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought ——

LADY S. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

MRS. C. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was so young!

LADY S. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

MRS. C. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

LADY S. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface ——

SIR B. (R.). Ay, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

MRS. C. No, no:—indeed the assignation was with Charles.

LADY S. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour.

MRS. C. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

SIR B. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not ——

MRS. C. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

LADY S. Nor I, a syllable.

SIR B. No! what, no mention of the duel?

(Crosses c. MRS. C. crosses to R.)

MRS. C. (R.). Not a word.

SIR B. (C.). Oh, yes; they fought before they left the room.

LADY S. (L.). Pray, let us hear.

MRS. C. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

SIR B. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

MRS. C. Ay, to Charles ——

SIR B. No, no, no—to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

MRS. C. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface would fight in his own house.

SIR B. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all—"giving me immediate satisfaction." On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords——

Enter CRAB., L. I E.; *crosses* L. C.

CRAB. (L. C.). With pistols, nephew—pistols; I have it from undoubted authority.

MRS. C. (*crossing to* CRAB.). Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

CRAB. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded——

SIR B. (R.). By a thrust *in segoon* quite through his left side——

CRAB. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

MRS. C. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

CRAB. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter if he could.

MRS. C. I told you who it was; I knew Charles was the person.

SIR B. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

CRAB. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

SIR B. That I told you, you know——

CRAB. Do, nephew, let me speak!—and insisted on immediate——

SIR B. Satisfaction! Just as I said——

CRAB. Odd's life, nephew, allow others to know something, too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so unluckily the pistols were left charged.

SIR B. I heard nothing of this.

CRAB. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one; and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakspeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the

door with a double letter from Northamptonshire. But whether or not the letter was postpaid I am quite unable to tell.

SIR B. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the only true one, for all that.

LADY S. (*aside*). I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

Exit, L. I E.

SIR B. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

CRAB. Yes, yes, they certainly do say —

ALL. What?

CRAB. But that's neither here nor there.

MRS. C. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

CRAB. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

MRS. C. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

CRAB. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

SIR B. Hey! who comes here?

(*Goes to door at L. and stands there as SIR O. enters.*)

CRAB. Oh, this is he; the physician, depend on't.

MRS. C. Oh, certainly! it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

Enter SIR O., L. I E. SIR B., CRAB. and MRS. C. all follow him down stage and get about him.

CRAB. (R. C.). Well, doctor, what hopes?

MRS. C. (R.). Ay, doctor, how's your patient?

SIR B. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword?

(*Comes down on SIR O.'s L.*)

CRAB. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred.

SIR O. Doctor! a wound with a small-sword! and a bullet in the thorax! Oons! are you mad, good people?

SIR B. (L.). Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

SIR O. (C.). Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

CRAB. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

SIR O. Not a word !

CRAB. Not of his being dangerously wounded ?

SIR O. The devil he is !

SIR B. Run through the body ——

CRAB. Shot in the breast ——

SIR B. By one Mr. Surface ——

CRAB. Ay, the younger.

SIR O. Hey ! what the plague ! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts : however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

SIR B. Oh, yes, we agree in that.

(*Crosses behind to extreme R., MRS. C. moving up stage a little.*)

CRAB. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

SIR O. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive ; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter. (Enter SIR P., L. I E.) Odd's heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you ; for we had just given you over.

SIR B. (R.). Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery !

SIR O. (L. C.). Why, man, what do you out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax ?

SIR P. (L.). A small-sword, and a bullet !

SIR O. Ay, these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me doctor, to make me an accomplice.

SIR P. Why, what is all this ? (*Crosses to R. C.*)

SIR B. (*extreme L.*). We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true (*crossing to C.*) and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

(*Describing a circle he moves up stage a little to R. of his former position.*)

SIR P. (*aside*). So, so ! all over town already.

CRAB. (L.). Though, Sir Peter, you are certainly vastly to blame (*moving to C.*) to marry at your years.

(*Bowing to SIR P., repeats SIR B.'s maneuver and rests a little to R. of him.*)

SIR P. Sir ! What business is that of yours ?

MRS. C. (L. C.). Though, indeed, as Sir Peter (*coming to c.*) made so good a husband he's much to be pitied.

(*Repeats maneuver of SIR B. and CRAB., and rests at R. of CRAB.*)

SIR P. A plague on your pity.

SIR B. (*advancing to c.*). However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

(*Repeats former business and rests a little further up stage and a trifle to L. of his former position.*)

SIR P. I desire to be master in my own house.

CRAB. (*advancing to c.*). 'Tis no uncommon case.

(*Up stage to R. of SIR B.*)

SIR P. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony I insist on your leaving my house directly!

MRS. C. (*advancing to c.*). Well, well, we are going, and depend on't we'll make the best report of it we can.

(*Up stage to R. of CRAB.*)

SIR P. Leave my house!

CRAB. And tell how hardly you've been treated —

SIR P. Leave my house!

SIR B. And how patiently you bear it.

Exeunt MRS. C., CRAB. *and* SIR B., L. I E.

SIR P. Leave my house! Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them! (*Crosses L.*)

SIR O. They are very provoking, indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROW., L. I E.

ROW. (L.). I heard high words; what has ruffled you, sir?

SIR P. (C.). Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without vexations?

ROW. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

SIR O. (R.). Well, I am not inquisitive; I come only to tell you that I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

SIR P. A precious couple they are !

ROW. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

SIR O. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

ROW. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

SIR O. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

ROW. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

SIR O. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age ! But how's this, Sir Peter ; you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected ?

SIR P. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

ROW. What ! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life ?

SIR P. Pshaw ! Plague on you both ! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you !

ROW. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's, so humble that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

SIR P. And does Sir Oliver know all this ?

SIR O. Every circumstance.

SIR P. What, of the closet and the screen, hey ?

SIR O. Yes, yes ; and the little French milliner that couldn't speak a word of English. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

SIR P. 'Twas very pleasant.

SIR O. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you. Ha ! ha ! ha !

SIR P. Oh, vastly diverting ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

ROW. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments. Ha ! ha !

SIR P. Yes, yes ; his sentiments ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Hypocritical villain !

SIR O. Ay, and that rogue Charles, to pull Sir Peter out of the closet ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

SIR P. Ha ! ha ! 'Twas devilish entertaining, to be sure.

SIR O. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

SIR P. Yes, yes ; my face when the screen was thrown down ! That was worth seeing. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh, I must never show my head again !

SIR O. But come, come; it isn't fair to laugh at you, neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

SIR P. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account; it does not hurt me at all. I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing joke for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes; and then, of a morning, to read the paragraph about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so entertaining! I shall certainly leave town to-morrow, and never look mankind in the face again.

(*Crosses to L.*)

Row. (*crossing to c.*) Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. (*Looks off R.*) But I see Lady Teazle going toward the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

(*Crosses to L., and SIR P. returns to c.*)

SIR O. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. (*Crosses up L.*) Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine at least to expose hypocrisy.

SIR P. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there (*exit, L. & E., SIR O.*) with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries. (*Looks off R.*) She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Row. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

WARN change.

SIR P. Certainly, a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Row. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

SIR P. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers, evidently intended for Charles?

Row. A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

SIR P. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

SIR P. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

SIR P. I'faith, so I will! (*up R.*) and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion —

SIR P. Hold, Master Rowley! If you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment; I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life.

Exeunt, R. 2 E.

CHANGE set.

Scene III.—*The library in JOSEPH'S house.*

Enter LADY S. and JOSEPH, L. 1 E.

LIGHTS full up.

LADY S. (R.). Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of consequence no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

JOSEPH (L.). Can passion furnish a remedy?

LADY S. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

READY knock.

JOSEPH. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road to wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated, neither.

LADY S. No!

JOSEPH. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us?

LADY S. I do believe so.

JOSEPH. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows of honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support.

LADY S. This, indeed, might have assisted.

JOSEPH. Come, come ; it is not too late yet. (*Knocking at*

KNOCK off L.

the door, L.) But hark ! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver : retire to that room ; we'll consult further when he is gone.

LADY S. Well, but if *he* should find you out, too ?

JOSEPH. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side !

LADY S. I have no diffidence of your abilities ! Only be constant to one roguery at a time.

Exit, R. I E.

JOSEPH. I will, I will. So ! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederates in evil. (*Crosses to R.*) Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's that I certainly — Hey !—what !—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't ! that he should return to tease me just now. I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and — (**Enter SIR O.**, L. I E.) Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time ? You must not stay now, upon my word.

SIR O. (L.). Sir, I hear your Uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

JOSEPH (R.). Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg — Come any other time, and I promise you you shall be assisted.

SIR O. No : Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

JOSEPH. Zounds, sir ! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

SIR O. Nay, sir —

JOSEPH. Sir, I insist on't ; here (*calling off L.*), William, show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir,—not one moment—this is such insolence ! (*Goes to push him out at L.*)

Enter CHARLES, L. I E.

CHARLES. Hey day ! what's the matter now ! What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here ? (*JOSEPH crosses to R.*) Zounds, brother ! don't hurt little Premium. (*Crosses C.*) What's the matter, my little fellow ?

JOSEPH (R.). So ! he has been with you too, has he ?

CHARLES (C.). To be sure he has. Why, he's as honest a little — But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you ?

JOSEPH. Borrowing ! No ! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every —

CHARLES. Oh, Gad, that's true ! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure !

JOSEPH. Yet Mr. Stanley insists —

CHARLES. Stanley ! why, his name's Premium.

JOSEPH. No, sir, Stanley.

CHARLES. No, no ; Premium.

JOSEPH. Well, no matter which—but —

CHARLES. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say ; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-house.

JOSEPH. 'Sdeath ! here's Sir Oliver at the door. Now I beg, Mr. Stanley —

CHARLES. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Premium —

SIR O. Gentlemen —

JOSEPH. Sir, by heaven you shall go !

CHARLES. Ay, ay, out with him, certainly !

SIR O. This violence —

JOSEPH. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

CHARLES. Out with him, to be sure.

(*Both force SIR O. out, R.*)

Enter, L. I E., SIR P. *with* LADY T. *on his right arm and* MARIA *on his left.* ROW. *follows.* CHARLES *and* JOSEPH *cross to R. and* R. C. SIR O. *to C.*)

SIR P. My old friend Sir Oliver—hey ! What in the name of wonder—here are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle at a first visit !

LADY T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

ROW. Truly, it was ; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

SIR O. Nor Premium either ; the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman ; and with the other I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

(CHARLES *and* JOSEPH *lean against each other confused.*)

JOSEPH (R. C.). Charles !

CHARLES (R.). Joseph !

JOSEPH. 'Tis now complete !

CHARLES. Very !

SIR O. (C.). Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, too—look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty ; and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half of my fortune as held in trust for him : judge then of my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude.

SIR P. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration if I had not myself found him to be selfish, treacherous and hypocritical.

LADY T. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call me to testify to his character.

SIR P. Then, I believe, we need add no more : if he knows himself he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to the world.

CHARLES (*aside*). If they talk this way to honesty, what will they say to me, by-and-by ?

(SIR P., LADY T. and MARIA retire up L. and converse.)

SIR O. As for that prodigal, his brother, there —

CHARLES (*aside*). Ay, now comes my turn : the damned family pictures will ruin me.

JOSEPH (*recovering himself*). Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing ?

CHARLES (*aside*). Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

SIR O. (*to JOSEPH*). I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself ?

JOSEPH. I trust I could.

SIR O. Nay, if you desert your roguery in its distress, and try to be justified, you have even less principle than I thought you had. (JOSEPH goes up R., SIR O. crosses to CHARLES at R. C., with a smile. To CHARLES.) Well, sir ! you could justify yourself, too, I suppose ?

CHARLES. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

SIR O. What ! Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose ?

CHARLES. True, sir ; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Row. (L.). Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

SIR O. (c.). Odd's heart, no more I can; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors—sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china?

CHARLES. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may certainly rise up in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

SIR O. Charles, I believe you; give me your hand again; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

CHARLES. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

(SIR O. and CHARLES go up hand in hand.)

LADY T. (*advancing, c., MARIA on her left*). Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

SIR O. (SIR O. and CHARLES come down together, reversing their positions; SIR O. at R., CHARLES, R. c.). Oh! I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right, that blush——

SIR P. (*coming down L. c.*). Well, child, speak your sentiments. Oh, curse that word!

MARIA. Sir, I have little to say but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his attention I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

CHARLES. How, Maria!

SIR P. Hey day! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him.

MARIA. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

(Goes up stage.)

CHARLES. Lady Sneerwell!

JOSEPH (*coming down extreme R.*). Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to

justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. (*Opens the door R.*)

LADY T.

CHARLES.

MARIA.

SIR O.

SIR P.

JOSEPH.

ROW.

R.

L.

(*All look R.*)

Enter LADY S., R. I E.

SIR P. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose.

(*Goes up stage followed by LADY T. and MARIA.*)

LADY S. (*coming forward between JOSEPH and SIR O.*). Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

CHARLES. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

JOSEPH. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

SIR P. (*coming down c. with LADY T. on his L. and MARIA on his R.*). And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

ROW. (*opening door at L.*). Crawl in, Mr. Snake. (*Enter SNAKE, L. I E., and comes down L.*) I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens, unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

LADY S. (R.). A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow; have you, too, conspired against me?

SNAKE (L.). I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question, but I, unfortunately, have been offered double to speak the truth.

SIR P. Plot and counter-plot! I wish your ladyship joy of your negotiation.

(SIR P. and LADY T. retire a little up c. CHARLES and MARIA go up R. together.)

LADY S. (*crossing L.*). The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

LADY T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, let me

thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

LADY S. You, too, madam!—provoking—insolent! May your husband live these fifty years!

Exit, L. I E.

SIR P. Oons! what a fury!

LADY T. A malicious creature, indeed!

SIR P. (*on* LADY T.'S R.). What! Not for her last wish?

LADY T. Oh, no!

SIR O. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

JOSEPH. Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say: however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. For the man who attempts to — (*Crosses and exit, L. I E.*)

SIR P. Moral to the last!

SIR O. (*calling after* JOSEPH). Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar! Egad! you'll do very well together.

ROW. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake, at present.

SNAKE (L.). Before I go, I beg pardon once for all for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

SIR P. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

SNAKE. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

SIR P. Hey—what the plague! Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

SNAKE. Ah, sir, consider,—I live by the badness of my character; and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

SIR O. Well, well; we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear.

SNAKE. Thank you, sir.

Exit, L. I E.

LADY T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

SIR O. Ay, ay, that's as it should be; and, egad, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

CHARLES. Thank you, dear uncle!

SIR P. What, you rogue! Don't you ask the girl's consent first?

CHARLES. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

WARN curtain.

MARIA. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

SIR O. Well, then, the fewer the better; may your love for each other never know abatement!

SIR P. And may you live as happy together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

CHARLES. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

SIR P. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

CHARLES. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it; but here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide—ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine!

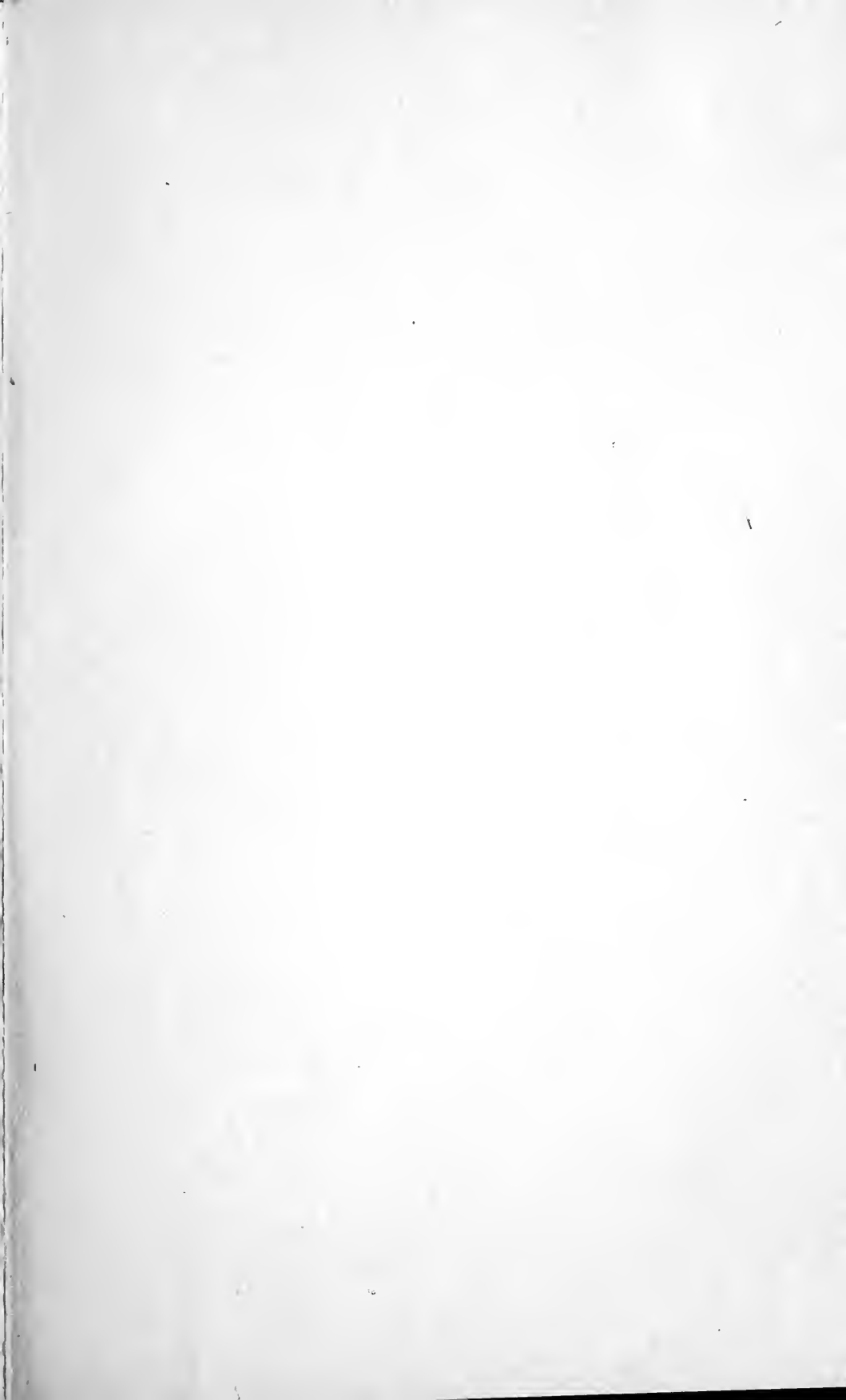
Though thou, dear maid, should'st waive thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey:
An humble fugitive from Folly's view,
No sanctuary near but love and you: [*To the audience.*]
You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies, if you approve.

RING slow curtain.

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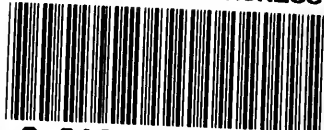
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